

Pitching Philosophy and Pick-off Moves

The following principles should be engrained in every Saber pitchers' mind:

1. The first strike against the batter is the most important pitch (you will need to mix locations and pitches = can't throw a fastball down the gut each batter).
2. In order to be a successful varsity pitcher you must have command of an off-speed pitch (change-up or curve ball) that you can throw on fastball counts.
3. The first out of every inning is the most important.
4. Your goal is to strike out the last batter of every inning.
5. After the final out of the inning, if it's not a strikeout, high-five the players involved in the final play.

Pick-off Moves:

To 1B/General rules:

- Hands and ball must be separate when taking signs; throwing hand must be behind hip.
- Your hands should meet just under your chin in the set position.
- Your feet should be shoulder width apart in the set position.
- Your head can do anything, but your shoulders cannot move.
- When throwing home, you must pause for at least one second in the set position; do not get into the same routine = mix up your timing!
- Learn to slide step home – don't have a big leg kick! Give your catchers a chance!
- If you step off the rubber, you become a fielder and can do anything with the baseball (throw, not throw, run at the runner).
- If you don't step off the rubber first, you must throw the ball (1B only).

RH pitchers to 1B:

- 1st time runner on base use step off move (slow and simple)
- Follow that weak move up with your quick move (spin to throw immediately after sign, and just as your hands meet).
- Regular move = after coming to the set position, hands and feet spin and throw at the same time. Use a short arm throw with your glove "chicken-winged" to your chest.
- Mix up these moves throughout the game – even pause for extended time to force the batter to call time out or step off from time-to-time. You are in control of the pace.

LH pitcher to 1B:

- You have a 45 degree angle to step toward 1B (half way between home and 1B), use it!
- Do not become predictable with your head (common to look at runner when throwing home and looking home when throwing to 1B = mix that up).
- Second move = step off rubber quickly and throw in one motion if runner has big lead or you suspect runners are going on your first movement. Don't have to throw this one.
- Good practice to have runner on 1B (steal or not) and LHP reads him whether to throw to 1B or home = motion should look the same – decide on runner's movements!

Pick-offs to 2B: Work on signals with SS/2B or use “daylight” between SS and runner

- Spin toward glove side (both feet spin/rotate 180 degrees to 2B)
- Pick up lead leg and rotate back – opening up to throwing hand side. This is a slower but more deceptive move. This is a great move to mix in if opponents are trying to steal 3B or with a 3-2 count, 2 outs, and runners on 1st and 2nd.
- REMEMBER, you DO NOT have to throw to 2B = “No play, no throw!”

Pick-offs to 3B: Work on signal with 3B

- RH like LH to 1B (45 degree angle) = 3B breaks on first movement
- LH like RH to 1B = after coming to the set position, hands and feet spin and throw at the same time.
- BEST MOVE to 3B is out of the wind-up = Take sign from catcher, step back with throwing hand foot before making any other movement/can't deceive the wind-up motion – you can throw or become a fielder, as needed, after stepping off with the correct foot.
- REMEMBER, you DO NOT have to throw to 3B = “No play, no throw!”

Runners on 1st and 3rd:

- Fake move to 3B; throw to 1B (don't have to throw = “No play, no throw!”)
- If runners do anything funny (leave early) or there's any confusion, step off = you become a fielder. Remember the runner on 3B is most dangerous; don't let him score.
- Less common but can be done = step off the rubber, fake to 1B and throw to 3B (don't have to throw = “No play, no throw!”).
- You are in control of the situation, not the runners!